ORIGIN/ACTION		
INR-10		
RM/R 1	REP	AF
ARA 4	EUR 5	FE
NEA	CU 5	INR
E 4	SCA 2	5/1
IL 2	FBO 1	AID 12
OC 2	USIA 1	I/IB 1
AGR 2	COM 2	FRB
INT	LAB 2	TAR
TR 2	XMB	AIR 75
ARMY 15	CIA 15	NAVY 14
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NSC 3		HEW 1

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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TO : DEPARTMENT OF STATE 1963 MAR 18 PM 2 51

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POLITICAL

1. Pressures On Ydígoras Continue To Increase

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FORM DS-323 4-62

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POLITICAL

1. Pressures On Ydígoras Continue To Increase

Guatemala's military leaders as well as anti-Arévalo, anti-Government political parties increased their pressure on President Miguel YDIGORAS Fuentes this week as the President maintained an apparently ambiguous attitude towards the scheduled return of presidential candidate Juan José AREVALO, and the President's party, Redención, selected its candidate, presidential confidant Roberto ALEJOS (Item 3 below). The general feeling of tension was augmented by street demonstrations by "anti-Communists" protesting Arévalo's return and by student demonstrations in commemoration of the death of three students in last year's (March-April) disturbances. (Item 3 below). Many political leaders, the Army and the public appeared to feel themselves trapped between "Communism and Continuism" (Arévalo and Alejos). It appeared key military leaders, increasingly disturbed over prospects, were seriously considering action in the near future to overthrow the Government and wipe the slate clean. Four political groups, the Partido Revolucionario (PR), Movimiento de Liberacion Nacional (MLN), Juan CORIOVA Cerna's Movimiento Social de Reconstrucción Nacional (MSRN), and Ricardo BARRIOS Peña's Acción Radical Democrata (ARD) reacted to Alejos' nomination with the publication of apparently coordinated manifestoes that virtually called for Ydígoras' ouster by claiming that, with an official candidate on the scene, there could be no free elections while Ydígoras was in power.

Reacting to the pressures on him, Ydígoras sought to open a safety valve by: 1) stating in a press interview that he had proof Arévalo was a Communist of long standing and consequently was legally "inhibited from being President"; 2) issuing verbal orders to airlines not to transport Arévalo to this country; and, 3) in response to a demand by Arevalist parties that the GOG guarantee Arévalo's rights, having his Minister of Government state that inasmuch as the ex-President persecuted Ydígoras and his supporters during the 1950 presidential campaign, no guarantees could be offered, and that the GOG assumed no responsibility for moves against Arévalo by persons seeking vengeance for his past "abominable acts". (CONFIDENTIAL)

Comment: The pressure gauge seemed to be sliding up towards the breaking point, and Ydígoras apparently felt he was being forced against the wall. He obviously hoped his press statements and approaches to the airlines (unpublicized but already pretty generally known) would placate the military. However, many anti-Arevalistas, apparently including important Army elements, felt he would not or could not keep Arévalo out. (CONFIDENTIAL)

Irrelevant